

THE CALLER

AMERICAN LUTHERAN
CHURCH
CASTLEWOOD, SD

Volume 30, Issue 5, May 2025

"Building a House" – P.T.'s Practical Theology

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock".

Matthew 7: 24

Now that the frost is about out of the ground, it's time that we will once again see our area contractors building again! It's exciting to see new construction, with all the trades doing their part in bringing to completion a new home or commercial building. And no matter what is being built, the most crucial part is ensuring that it has a solid foundation!

We know from the Holy Bible, that indeed our Lord Jesus grew up in the home of a carpenter, and so he knew a little something of the building trades. But, when Jesus tells the parable that is recorded in Matthew 7: 24-29, he's not talking about foundations for houses, rather he's talking about the foundations of peoples' spiritual lives.

The parable begins with the words: *"everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock"*. Because the wise man had taken great care to build his house's foundation on the rock, the house stood strong against wind and flood. In contrast, this parable also tells about a foolish man who built his house on sand. And Jesus says that when the wind blew and the floods came, that house fell, *"and great was its fall"*!

I believe that Jesus is giving us good caution in this passage to be sure that our spiritual foundation is built on sound teachings. We get that clue from the words that immediately follow the parable, namely, *"the crowds were astonished at Jesus' teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes"*.

There are many voices in today's world that are competing for our souls. Some of those voices are well intentioned, while others speak with the intent to deceive. Some voices wish for us to find wisdom from within ourselves, while others say that wisdom is found only in their teachings. But, as Christian people, we believe and confess that there is only one source of teaching that holds true authority for our faith and life. That source is the Word of God.



“Building a House” – P.T.’s Practical Theology cont.

We are called to test every teaching to see whether or not it is in keeping with the Word of God. If it is not, we are to reject it, and stay clear of that teacher. The Apostle Paul says as much, when in Romans 16 he writes “*watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites*”.

So, in the name of Jesus Christ, I implore us all to ensure that the foundations of our souls are being built on the solid rock of God’s Word, and not upon anything contrary to it. For, our spiritual lives and our eternal destinies are at stake. AMEN

To Him alone be the glory!

Pastor Tom



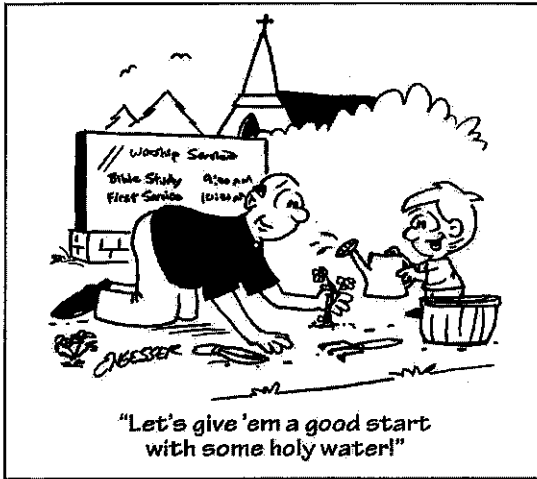
Rite of First Communion

Sutton Dustin Foster - *Son of Dustin & Danielle Foster*
Drew Mona Ruml - *Daughter of Philip & Jessie Ruml*
Vienna Rae Smith – *Daughter of Andy & Sarah Smith*

Lots of Thanks!

- ◆ Thanks to those who took part in the Lenten Dramas.
- ◆ Thanks to those who served the Lenten Meals.
- ◆ Thanks to those who gave free-will offerings for the meals.....\$780 in profit for the Youth Group.
- ◆ Thanks to those who provided Spring Flowers to beautify our sanctuary for Easter.
- ◆ Thanks to the ALC youth who led our Easter Sunrise Service.
- ◆ Thanks to Brenda Almos and Vicki Strait who facilitated the Easter Breakfast
- ◆ Thanks to those who enjoyed the Easter Breakfast....\$434 in profit for the Youth Group.
- ◆ Thanks to those who have led our Sunday School this season. Our last SS before summer break will be May 11th.





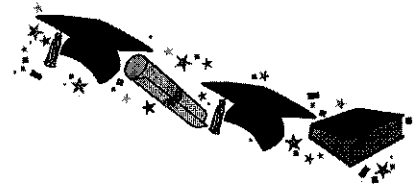
May 2025

Sun Mo Tue We Thu Fri Sat

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 1st National Day of Prayer
- 4th 8:30 a.m. Sr, High/Adult Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Worship Service—Senior Recognition with Holy Communion
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open
- 6th ESD Pastor Meeting at Seminary in Brookings
- 11th *Mother's Day*
8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Worship Service
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
- 14th Pastors Text Study in Watertown
- 17th Armed Forces Day
- 18th 8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Church Council
- 25th 9:00 a.m. Worship Service
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
- 26th **MEMORIAL DAY**
- 29th Ascension Day



Remember there is **CALENDAR** on our Website! Go to: americanlutheran-church.com and you can see the calendar of events for American Lutheran. If you have anything church related to add to the calendar, please contact Pastor Tom at pastortlc@gmail.com



Dawn Mickey	5-01	David Prohl	5-13
Kylie Haight	5-02	Mark Larson	5-16
Jerrod Bass	5-03	Aidan Grupe	5-17
Lawson Vetter	5-04	Ted Sutton	5-20
Shawn Prohl	5-08	Emery Larson	5-21
Leslie Tvedt	5-08	Tanner Grupe	5-26
James Mickey	5-11	Michaela Davis	5-27
Dawn Wiersma	5-12	Tyler Christianson	5-28
		Garrett Karst	5-28
		Katie Fischer	5-29
		Kim Fischer	5-29
		Peggy Wittnebel	5-31

Please notify the church with your...



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER MAY 1, 2025



Angela Larson	5-08
Lorie Mack	5-11
Maddox Nielsen	5-11
Brenda Almos	5-12
Duane Laue	5-13
Robert Miller	5-31



Joann & Rodney Fischer 5-18

Estelline Nursing Home

Carrie Henrichsen

Geraldine Gantvoort

Lake Norden Care Center

Richard Tvedt

Castlewood Assisted Living

Lorene Tvedt



What was the name of the wealthy merchant of purple cloth who met Paul and his companions, was baptized and became a leader in the Philippian church?

- A. Priscilla
- B. Lydia
- C. Dorcas





Senior Recognition - Sunday, May 4th!

During the morning worship and the fellowship hour we will honor the following ALC members who will graduate from CHS on the 10th. Their Baccalaureate Service will be on Wednesday, May 7th at 7:00 pm in the gymnasium.



Emerson Carter, daughter of Charlie and Jenni Carter
Paul Everson, son of Travis and Sandra Everson
Drake Langenfeld, son of Chad Langenfeld & Kelsi Langenfeld

You're going places!

Commencement marks the beginning of a new stage of life, with graduates heading off to discover opportunities and face challenges. *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* – a Dr. Seuss book that's now a popular graduation gift – whimsically explores life's ups and downs, twists and turns.

Young adults will face excitement and slumps, fun and loneliness. They'll feel a sense of purpose as well as confusion and even fear. "There are some [things], down the road between hither and yon, that can scare you so much you won't want to go on," writes Dr. Seuss.

In the storybook, the life-traveler's sheer determination propels him beyond difficulties. But God's children don't need to journey alone. Our heavenly Father walks beside us on every winding path and around every corner. Life cannot take us anywhere God hasn't been first. Graduates – and all Christians – can trust in the promise of Joshua 1:9 (NRSV): "Be strong and courageous ... for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

NewsletterNewsletter



ONLINE GIVING

Our congregational website: americanlutheranchurch.com now has a link on the home page for online donations: **DONATE NOW**. From that link, you can set One-time, Weekly or Monthly Offerings.

If you point the camera on your cell phone at the QR code it will take you to the donation page.

Remember the CALENDAR on our Website!

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"The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close. —Unknown



Youth Group Summer Mission Trip!

June 15-18, Mission Trip to Minneapolis.

Register with Pastor Tom by Sunday, May 18th!

We will leave after church on Sunday the 15th, and will serve on Monday and Tuesday with Global Health Ministries, a Christian organization that our congregation and the women of the church have financially supported in the past



Our evening events will be decided by those who attend, but could include, a St. Paul Saints Baseball game, the Como Park Zoo, the Mall of America, or other sites and sounds of the big city! If the group chose we could come home on Wednesday morning, or if there was interest we could do the Minnesota Zoo at Apple Valley or ValleyFair.

The youth fund and our fund-raisers will cover your costs. If you invite a friend to join us, their cost would only be \$100. Please contact Pastor Tom to reserve your spot!!



Vacation Bible School

Sponsored by

American Lutheran Church,
First Presbyterian Church,
Hamlin Reformed Church,
And Bemis Presbyterian Church

June 9-13, 2025

9:00 AM—1:00 PM

(more information to come)



Sr. High/Adult Choir!



Practices on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month in the fellowship hall and will generally be prepared to provide the anthem on the 3rd Sunday in Worship.

Blessing Center Collection

We remind the congregation that there is a collection box in the narthex, and ask that each ALC family bring in a few non-perishable items each month to support this local ministry.



Church Council Meeting Minutes
American Lutheran Church
March 16th, 2025

Members Present: Danny Davis, Andy Smith, Lindsey Vetter, Pastor Tom, John Bucher, Amanda Pribbenow, Doug Strait, Traci Bass, Al Schochenmaier and Mark Larson.

Call to Order: President Bucher called the meeting to order, declaring a voting quorum as being present.

Prayer: Led by Pastor Tom

Meeting Minutes: Review of February 9th, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion by Traci Bass and a 2nd by Lindsey Vetter to approve. **MC**

Financial Report: Treasurer Strait presented the February 2025 financial report for review. An error was noted that Pastor Tom was paid \$6.53 for worship supplies when this payment should have been paid to the vendor. Pastor and Doug will get this worked out. Motion by Lindsey, second by Amanda to approve the report as presented. **MC**

Pastor's Report: Pastor Tom handed out registration forms and an agenda for the upcoming Joint Convocation for Eastern South Dakota and Minkota Mission Districts (NALC) to be held at Hosana Lutheran Church in Watertown, SD on April 4th and 5th, 2025. Pastor encouraged Council members to be present for this event and that he will also be announcing this event to the Congregation in the coming weeks.

Pastor Tom gave a quick update on the Lenten season and weekly youth meal. He also advised that The Rite of Confirmation will be on the Sunday after Easter. John Bucher advised that he would be present for the confirmands barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Old Business:

The basement floor epoxy is now completed. President Bucher will spearhead efforts in getting a group of people put together to reset the various items. Pastor Tom has been working on painting the lower-level bathrooms.

It was agreed by all council members to approve \$250.00 for the trip to Kids Against Hunger. Treasurer Strait will get Pastor a check to hand deliver today.

The handrails for the east entrance will be addressed as the weather continues to improve to allow for installation.

Communion Schedule:

April 6th, 2025: John Bucher
April 17th, 2025: Al Schochenmaier
April 20th, 2025: Traci Bass
April 27th, 2025: Traci Bass

New Business:

President Bucher provided additional information regarding a request / offer to purchase a security camera system for the Church. A discussion was held, and all Council Members agreed to uphold/affirm the prior decision of not allowing a camera system.

A discussion was had concerning upcoming summer youth camps / scholarships. Pastor will get this information out in the next bulletins. No action taken.

Andy Smith recommended that the monthly newsletter be updated more frequently and prior to events occurring. A discussion was held, and it was brought up that the on-line calendar is typically up to date. No further action or discussion was taken.

President Bucher will work on a statement for the upcoming bulletin regarding the epoxy flooring now being completed.

Doug Strait brought up some Certificate of Deposits (CD's) that the Church holds at First Premier Bank. Doug indicated that the current account contacts are Dan Grupe and Rod Fischer and that First Premier Bank has requested a copy of the meeting minutes to make changes to this. A motion was made by Pastor Tom with a 2nd by Andy Smith to approve the removal of Dan Grupe and Rod Fischer as account contacts and to add Doug Strait and John Bucher to the account. **MC.**

Next Council Meeting: The next council meeting was scheduled for April 13th, 2025, following worship.

Closing: With no further matters at hand a Motion by Traci Bass to adjourn. Second by Lindsey Vetter. **MC.**

Pastor led us in the Lord's Prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Larson, Secretary

**American Lutheran Church Financial Report
March 2025**

General Account

Balance on hand 3-1-2025			\$ 60,076.61
Receipts			
Offerings	\$	10,205.80	
Confirmation	\$	25.00	
Thrivent	\$	123.00	\$ 10,353.80
Disbursements			
Thomas Christenson (Pastor Salary)	\$	4,905.50	
Thomas Christenson (Social Security)	\$	310.34	
Thomas Christenson (Housing Equity)	\$	200.00	
Thomas Christenson (Mileage - 378 Miles)	\$	314.60	
Retirement Contribution	\$	500.55	
EBSO (Health Insurance)	\$	4,900.00	
Tristar Management (Ancillary Benefits)	\$	572.11	
Janell Bemis (Secretary - 27 hrs)	\$	388.98	
Tracy Laue (Custodian - 20.5 hrs)	\$	275.64	
Roxanne Bass (Organist - 4 Svcs)	\$	260.00	
Marsha Kurtenbach (Organist - 4 Svcs)	\$	260.00	
Karen Lund (Organist - 1 Svcs)	\$	65.00	
City of Castlewood (Ch: \$65, Pars: \$94.80)	\$	159.80	
ITC (Phone & Internet)	\$	129.47	
NorthWestern Energy (Ch: \$391.13, Pars: \$103.42)	\$	494.55	
Otter Tail Power (Ch: \$116.39, Pars: \$77.66)	\$	194.05	
North Star Mutual Insurance Company	\$	500.92	
NALC	\$	50.00	
Office Peeps (Office supplies & Copier)	\$	153.50	
Concordia (bulletin inserts)	\$	115.53	
Tracy Laue (furnace filters)	\$	127.31	
Church Art Online (annual subscription)	\$	69.95	\$ (14,947.80)

Balance on hand 3-31-2025	\$ 55,482.61
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*** Confirmation Balance	\$	1,367.24
*** Thrivent Choice Balance	\$	2,432.36

Building Account

Balance on hand 3-1-2025			\$ 42,852.69
Receipts			
Offerings for Building Fund	\$	135.00	\$ 135.00
Disbursements			
Total Epoxy Systems (basement floor)	\$	9,000.00	
Menards (two basement toilets)	\$	210.28	\$ (9,210.28)

Balance on hand 3-31-2025	\$ 33,777.41
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Mission Account

Balance on hand 3-1-2025			\$ 4,725.53
Receipts			
Offerings for Mission Fund	\$	536.00	
Children's Offering	\$	48.25	
Offerings for Blessing Center	\$	70.00	\$ 654.25
Disbursements			
Kids Against Hunger	\$	250.00	
China Service Ventures (3 months childrens offering)	\$	132.25	
Castlewood Blessing Center (offerings for March)	\$	70.00	\$ (452.25)

Balance on hand 3-31-2025	\$ 4,927.53
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Memorial Account

Balance on hand 3-1-2025			\$ 4,358.31
Receipts	\$	-	\$ -
Disbursements	\$	-	\$ -

Balance on hand 3-31-2025	\$ 4,358.31
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Account Summary

	Current Balance	Change March 2025	Change Year to Date
General Account	\$ 55,482.61	\$ (4,594.00)	\$ (5,557.25)
Building Account	\$ 33,777.41	\$ (9,075.28)	\$ (9,133.97)
Mission Account	\$ 4,927.53	\$ 202.00	\$ 1,061.95
Memorial Account	\$ 4,358.31	\$ -	\$ -



The Servants of our Lord

	<i>Organists</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Fellowship</i>	<i>Audio-Visual Technician</i>
	May 4	Roxanne Bass	John & Dawn Mickey	Chuck Juntti
	May 11	Marsha Kurtenbach	Charlie & Jenn Carter family	
	May 18	Roxanne Bass	John & Bonnie Top	Doug Strait
	May 25	Marsha Kurtenbach	Larry & Pat Dockter	Rod Fischer

ALTAR GUILD

May: Neda Ries & Carmen Jankord

June: Bonnie Top & Pat Dockter

Altar Guild takes care of the communion ware, change altar clothes, banners and fill oil candles when needed. Thank you for your service.

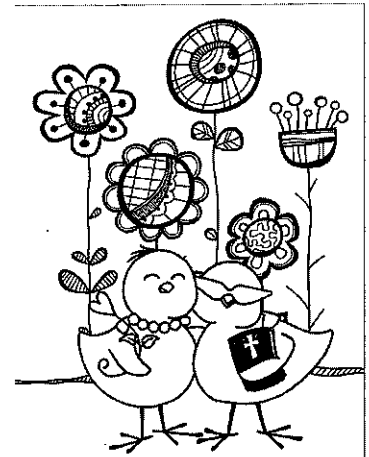
SIGN -UP SHEETS
 Lectors—
 (Scriptures sheets available)
 &
 Fellowship Servers
 IN THE
 NARTHEX

Our Faithfulness in Giving

	General	Building	Mission	*Children	*Blessing Ctr
May 30	\$1,960.00		\$10.00	\$9.25	
April 6	\$2,136.00	\$55.00	\$197.00	\$7.00	\$70.00
April 13	\$1,500.00	\$10.00	\$151.00	\$11.00	\$10.00
April 20	\$3,763.00		\$149.00	\$14.00	

*Childrens and Blessing Center amounts are included into the Mission account totals.

Items that you wish to borrow from the church, please contact Pastor Tom or Janell to coordinate the use of those items. Thank you!





Coffee Fellowship Announcement

The Church Council believes that providing a time of fellowship after our worship services is still a positive service. So, we will still be asking families to sign-up to serve on Sunday Mornings.

To make this easier for some, the Church Council at their April Meeting did approve the following change. Whereas in the past, your free-will offerings were ear-marked for various ministries, starting in May, your free-will offerings will be directed to the account of the Women of ALC. This will allow funds for the ALCW to purchase cookies to have in the freezer, and/or funds to purchase the ingredients to host a "cookie-bake" to service the fellowship hour.


Of course we would still love to have fresh baked goods, but this regular funding source will allow some families to sign-up to serve without the pressure or expense of making something.



A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

A group of second-graders was quizzed about what ingredients their mothers are made of. One child said, "God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world, and one dab of mean."

To the question "What does your mom do in her spare time?" one youngster said, "Mothers don't do spare time."

How to Reach Us

If there is a need for pastoral care please contact ...

Pastor Tom Christenson

When the children were asked "Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?" one child replied, "God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me."

The American Lutheran Caller

P.O. Box 132

Castlewood, SD 57223

Address Service Requested



WATCH US ON YOUTUBE & ITC!

*American Lutheran
Church's
Mission Statement*

The mission of American
Lutheran Church is to

**welcome,
worship,
teach and
serve**

In the name of Christ our Lord
and Savior!



americanlutheranchurch.com

2025 Church Council Members

John Bucher, President

Lindsey Vetter, Vice President

Mark Larson, Sec.

Doug Strait, Treas.

Jesse Ruml

Dan Davis

Traci Bass

Al Schochenmaier

Andy Smith

Amanda Pribbenow